

J.C. Watts, Jr.
Chairman
4th District, Oklahoma

*House Meets at 10:30 a.m. for Morning Hour and
12:00 Noon for Legislative Business
(No Votes Before Noon)*

Anticipated Floor Action:

H.R. 221—Addressing the Employment Needs of Amish Youth

H.R. 818—Disaster Mitigation and Cost Reduction Act

H.R. 609—Export Apple Act

**H.R. 882—Removing Time Constraints on the Secretary of Agriculture for
Guaranteeing Farm Loans**

H.J. Res. 32—Sense of Congress to Strengthen and Protect Social Security



Bills Considered Under Suspension of the Rules

Floor Situation: The House will consider the following five bills under suspension of the rules as its first order of business today. Each is debatable for 40 minutes, may not be amended, and requires a two-thirds majority vote for passage.

H.R. 221—Addressing the Employment Needs of Amish Youth amends the 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) to permit youths between the ages of 14-18 who are members of a religious sect or division that does not allow formal teaching beyond the eighth grade to work in businesses where machinery is used to process wood products. The bill permits such youth employment if (1) an adult—who also must be a member of the same religious sect or division—is present in a supervisory role; (2) the youth does not operate or assist in the operation of power-driven woodworking machines; (3) the youth is protected from flying debris or wood particles by a barrier or some other means; and (4) the youth is protected from excessive noise levels and sawdust by personal protective equipment. The bill was introduced by Mr. Pitts *et al.* and the Committee on Education & the Workforce reported the bill by voice vote on February 10, 1999.

H.R. 818—Disaster Mitigation Coordination Act authorizes the administrator of the Small Business Association (SBA), in conjunction with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), to establish a pilot loan program for small businesses and homeowners—\$15 million each year for FYs 2000-2004—to improve or relocate buildings, or take other preventative measures to lessen the impact of natural disasters. In addition, the bill requires the SBA administrator to report to Congress by January 31, 2003, on the number of loans made, the areas served, and the estimated savings to the government as a result of the program. The loans will be drawn from existing disaster loan funds and do not constitute new spending. The bill was introduced by Mr. Talent and was reported by the Small Business Committee by voice vote on February 25, 1999.

H.R. 609—Export Apple Act changes the title of the 1933 Export Apple and Pear Act to the “Export Apple Act.” The 1933 law requires that apples and pears meet certain standards before their export to ensure that only high quality U.S. fruit enters foreign markets. U.S. pear producers and shippers recommend that pears should be dropped from the act so that they can increase the volume of pear exports. Thus, the bill eliminates pears from the act, allowing U.S. exporters greater flexibility in the changing international marketplace and the chance to sell more goods abroad. The USDA believes the existing federal quality standards for pears are no longer needed to assure high quality pear exports. An identical bill (H.R. 4148) passed last year by voice vote. CBO estimates that enactment of the bill will have no impact on the federal budget. The bill was introduced by Mr. Walden and was reported by the Agriculture Committee by voice vote on February 10, 1999.

H.R. 882—Removing Time Constraints on the Secretary of Agriculture for Guaranteeing Farm Loans makes an estimated \$450 million to \$500 million in unused funds immediately available to the Secretary of Agriculture in order to guarantee operating and ownership loans to farmers and ranchers. Natural disasters and low commodity prices have created a credit crunch in rural America, exhausting loan funds made available under the FY99 Agriculture Appropriations Act. The unused funds are currently set aside for the Beginning Farmers and Ranchers program provided by the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act until April 1, 1999, after which the secretary may make these funds available to all producers eligible for USDA guaranteed loans. Because the funds in question are not being used and are not expected to be used, H.R. 882 makes the funds available immediately in order to meet immediate loan guarantee needs. The bill also requires the secretary to give beginning farmers and ranchers priority for funds made available for loan guarantees under any supplemental appropriations for FY 1999. The unused funds made available under H.R. 882 are for guaranteed loans only and not for direct lending. CBO states that enactment of this bill will not have any effect on the federal budget. The bill was introduced by Mr. Combest *et al.* and was not considered by a committee.

H.J. Res. 32—Sense of Congress to Strengthen and Protect Social Security expresses the sense of Congress that the president and Congress should work together to strengthen and protect the retirement income security of all Americans by creating a fair and modern Social Security program for the 21st century. The resolution states that such a plan should (1) ensure equal treatment for all generations; (2) recognize the “unique obstacles” that women face in ensuring retirement, disability, and survivor security; (3) provide a continuous benefit safety net for workers and their families; (4) protect guaranteed lifetime benefits for current and future retirees; and (5) not raise taxes. The resolution was introduced by Mr. Ryan; the Ways & Means Committee reported the resolution by a vote of 32-0 on February 24, 1999.

Additional Information: See *Legislative Digest*, Vol. XXVIII, #5, February 26, 1999.



To subscribe to this publication via e-mail, please send an e-mail to LegDigest@mail.house.gov and type "SUBSCRIBE" in the subject line.

THIS PUBLICATION IS ALSO AVAILABLE ON THE CONFERENCE WEB PAGE. Look for the *Legislative Digest* and *FloorPrep* under their respective sections at <http://hillsource.house.gov/LegislativeDigest>

Brian Fortune: *Managing Editor*

Kevin Smith: *Senior Legislative Analyst*

Scott Galupo, Brendan Shields:
Legislative Analysts

House
REPUBLICAN
Conference

Legislative
Digest